

NJ REEF NEWS

FREE COPY

2007 Edition



Concrete castings and reef balls await deployment on the TI Reef.



Concrete castings provide excellent habitat for all marine life.



Reef balls being deployed on the Townsends Inlet Reef.

Townsends Inlet Reef is Ready for Action

A major focus of last year's reef-building efforts centered on New Jersey's newest reef site, the Townsends Inlet Reef, which was a welcomed addition to the reef network for anglers from Avalon and Stone Harbor.

Located 3.8 nautical miles southeast of Townsends Inlet, the reef site is approximately 0.52 square miles in area and has a depth range of 49 to 65 feet. With the help of local businesses, fishing clubs, a fluke fishing tournament and other individuals, 500 reef balls, 1,100 tons of concrete castings, and a 31-foot vessel were deployed there in 2006.

The reef balls and concrete castings were deployed in patch reefs on the western side of the reef site (see Townsends Inlet Reef grid) in an area designated for drift fishing. Eight patch reefs were constructed with reef balls and eight patch reefs were constructed with castings. As a result of these deployments, a significant drift fishing area now exists. By the summer of 2007, these structures will be fully

-continued on p. 2-



31-foot former USCG crew boat.



New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Division of Fish and Wildlife

Lisa P. Jackson, Commissioner Jon S. Corzine, Governor



colonized with a living carpet of mussels, barnacles, anemones, sponges and other marine life, making these areas prime underwater real estate for summer flounder, black sea bass and tautog.

The vessel deployed, a 31-foot former United States Coast Guard crew boat was sunk at the east end of the reef site in an area designated for wreck fishing and scuba diving. The vessel lies in 60 feet of water and is now the third vessel sunk on the reef. Along with the other two vessels this wreck will provide excellent opportunities for wreck fishing and diving enthusiasts for the next 50 years.

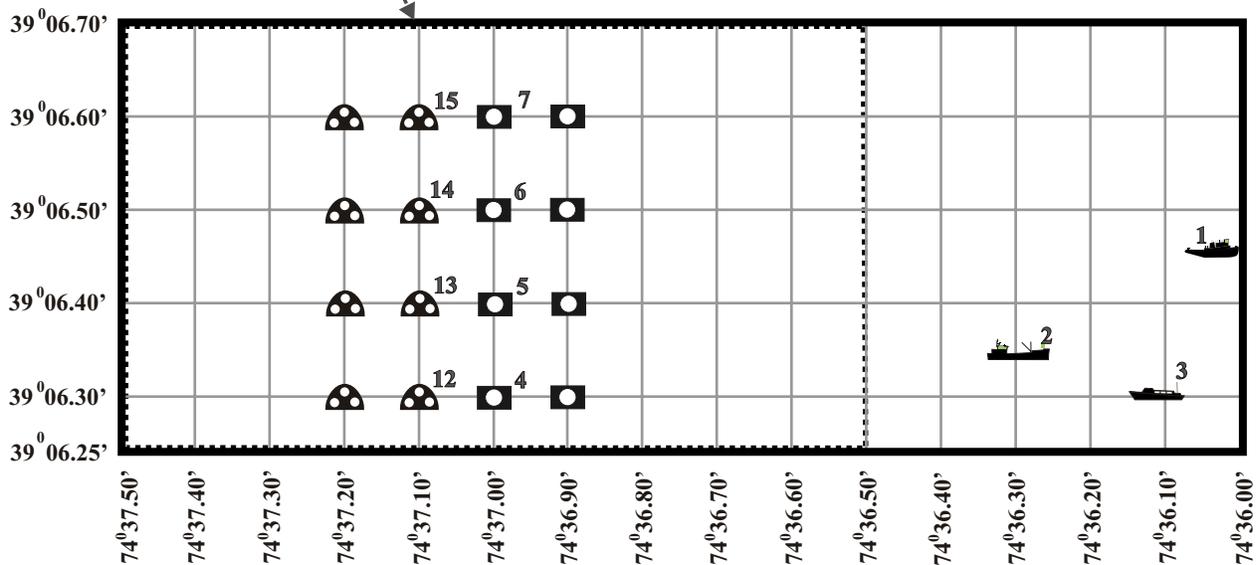
These reef construction activities not only provided vital habitat for marine life, but also are an important resource for coastal communities, benefitting fisherman and divers and boosting the state's fishing industry.



Townsends Inlet Reef

DGPS

DRIFT FISHING AREA
Recommend
no diving or anchoring



Distance offshore: 3.8 n.m.
Reef area: 0.52 sq. Mi.
Depth range: 45-70 ft.

From	→	Corson's Inlet	Townsends Inlet	Hereford Inlet
Compass bearing		182°	110°	66°
Distance, (n.m.)		5.73	3.8	9.31

2006 Reef Adoptions

The following reefs were constructed on July 18, 2006:

Dr. James Bonner Reef

A concrete castings reef sponsored by William Sheridan was constructed on the Townsends Inlet Reef.

Charles “Chuck” Holland Reef

A concrete castings reef sponsored by family and friends was constructed on Townsends Inlet Reef.

John Knowles Memorial Reef

A concrete castings reef sponsored by family and friends was constructed on Townsends Inlet Reef.

Joe Murray Sr. Memorial Reef

A concrete castings reef sponsored by family and friends was constructed on the Townsends Inlet Reef.

THEBASSBARN.COM Reef #10

A concrete castings reef sponsored by the THEBASSBARN.com was constructed on the Townsends Inlet Reef.

The following reefs were constructed on August 23, 2006:

THEBASSBARN.COM Reef #11

A Reef Ball reef sponsored by THEBASSBARN.com was constructed on the Townsends Inlet Reef.

THEBASSBARN.COM Reef #12

A Reef Ball reef sponsored by THEBASSBARN.com was constructed on Townsends Inlet Reef.

George Russel Buckman Reef

A Reef Ball reef sponsored by family and friends was constructed on Townsends Inlet Reef.

The Strathmere Fishing and Environmental Club Reef

A Reef Ball reef sponsored by the Strathmere Fishing and Environmental Club was constructed on the Townsends Inlet Reef.

Knights’ Reef

A Reef Ball reef sponsored by Avalon Hodge Podge was constructed on the Townsends Inlet Reef.

Trevor Dickson Reef

A concrete rubble reef sponsored by Trevor’s family and friends was constructed on the Sea Girt Reef on April 20, 2006

Mako Mania Drift Reef

On August 1, a reef sponsored by the Greater Point Pleasant Party and Charter Boast Association and the Ann E. Clark Foundation was constructed of concrete castings on the Axel Carlson Reef.

Fred Ecker Memorial Reef

A Reef Ball reef was sponsored by his wife was constructed on the Barnegat Light Reef

Exelon Reef

Exelon Corporations sponsored six patch reefs constructed on the Barnegat Light Reef.

Bill Messler Memorial Reef

A Reef Ball reef sponsored by his family was constructed on the Little Egg Reef.

Bob Illes Memorial Reef

A jetty rock reef sponsored by his family was constructed on the Sea Girt Reef on September 7, 2006.

Earls’ Family Reef

A concrete rubble reef sponsored by family was constructed on the Sea Girt Reef on October 27, 2006.

John “Butch” Karpowicz Memorial Reef

A rock mountain reef sponsored by family and friends was constructed on the Axel Carlson Reef.

John and Paul Modliszewski Memorial Reef

A rock mountain reef sponsored by family and friends was constructed on the Axel Carlson Reef.

Lyons’ Family Reef

A rock mountain reef sponsored by family was constructed on the Axel Carlson Reef.

Joseph and Marie Ertle Memorial Reef

A rock mountain memorial reef sponsored by family was constructed on the Axel Carlson Reef.

Jen’s Retreat

A rock mountain memorial reef sponsored by family and friends was constructed on the Axel Carlson Reef.





New Wrecks in '06



Lucky 7 - A 65-foot trawler was sunk on the Axel Carlson Reef on January 28, at DGPS coordinates 4003.452' 7358.985'. The Manasquan River Marlin and Tuna Club and the Ann E. Clark Foundation sponsored the vessel.



Margie Starns - A 31-foot former USCG crew boat was sunk on the Townsends Inlet Reef on July 18, at DGPS coordinates 3906.306' 7436.109'. Friends of Margie Starns sponsored the vessel.



AC Westcoat 2 - A 60-foot deck barge was sunk on the Ocean City Reef on July 26, at DGPS coordinates 3909.819' 7434.310'. AC Westcoat Bulkheads donated the vessel to the Reef Program.



MRMTC 8 - A 90-foot deck barge was sunk on the Axel Carlson Reef on October 3, at DGPS coordinates 4003.387' 7359.086'. The Manasquan Marlin and Tuna Club and the Ann E. Clark Foundation sponsored the vessel.



MRMTC 9 - A 178-foot tanker barge was sunk on the Axel Carlson Reef on October 3, at DGPS coordinates 4003.689' 7359.165'. The Manasquan Marlin and Tuna Club and the Ann E. Clark Foundation sponsored the vessel.





New Wrecks in '06



Angelo's Reef - A 63-foot trawler boat was sunk on the Axel Carlson Reef on November 11, at DGPS coordinates 4002.606' 7359.201'. The Greater Point Pleasant Party and Charter Boat Association sponsored the vessel.



Joe Houston - A 40-foot deck barge was sunk on the Barnegat Light Reef on November 28, at DGPS coordinates 3945.078' 7401.460'. The vessel was donated to the Reef Program by Kevin Coleman.



Johnny Mesday - A 40-foot deck barge was sunk on the Barnegat Light Reef on November 28, at DGPS coordinates 3945.079' 7401.445'. The vessel was donated to the Reef Program by Kevin Coleman.



Report tagged fish



NJ MARINE FISHERIES 1234

Objectives of the Reef Program

New Jersey's Reef Program is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife. The objectives of the program are to construct hard-substrate, reef habitat in the ocean for certain species of fish and shellfish, new fishing grounds for anglers, underwater structures for scuba divers and economic benefits to the fishing industry.

In constructing and managing reefs, the goal is to spread the benefits of reef resources to as many people as possible. The intent of the program is not to change New Jersey's marine environment, but rather to enhance a small portion, less than one percent of the sea floor, to benefit 150 species of marine life that prefer structured habitat

New Jersey Reef Supporter Recognition Awards

While thousands of individuals and dozens of organizations have donated their time, money and ideas towards the success of the DEP's Reef Program over the past 23 years, the following people are recognized for their outstanding and long-standing contributions to the development of reefs along the New Jersey coast:



Capt. Dick Herb

A veteran charter boat captain out of Avalon for more than 30 years, Dick Herb knows the value of high-profile hard structure on the ocean floor. He is a strong supporter of New Jersey's Reef Program and played a vital role in developing New Jersey's newest reef site located off of Townsends Inlet.

"This is one of the few ways to both enhance marine fish habitat and improve recreational fishing grounds," said Herb. As a member of New Jersey's Marine Fisheries Council (reef committee), Herb helped develop and review the latest New Jersey Artificial Reef Management Plan submitted in December 2005. Captain Herb also takes an active role in fisheries management issues, serving on a variety of committees and councils including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Cape May Charter and Party Boat Association.

Captains Paul and Ruth Hepler

Captains Paul and Ruth Hepler have been supporters of New Jersey's Reef Program for more than 20 years. The Heplers operate the dive charter vessel Venture III out of Shark River in Belmar, NJ.

Aboard the Venture III, the Heplers have helped build and monitor New Jersey reefs and assisted reef personnel with sinking numerous vessels, rock and concrete on reef sites off Monmouth and Ocean counties. They often revisit these sites at a later date with a dive group to observe marine life and hopefully harvest a few lobsters.

Paul and Ruth are both certified scuba divers and licensed captains. They particularly enjoy exploring low-profile wrecks that have settled into the sand, searching for partially buried artifacts and other benthic indicators that may to the experienced diver be evidence of more significant wreckage.

The Heplers deserve special thanks for their contributions and effort to help enhance and improve New Jersey's marine environment.



Captain Roger Hoden and Captain George Dreher

Building reefs is just one aspect of having a successful reef program. Assessing the effectiveness of reef structure in providing habitat for marine life is an important component of New Jersey's reef building program. There are many observations and surveys needed to document the condition of a reef.

Captain Roger Hoden and Captain George Dreher operate the dive charter vessel Dina Dee II out of Barnegat Light, N.J. Hoden and Dreher dive on New Jersey reefs and know first hand what is occurring on sunken vessels, rock, concrete and other appropriate reef material. They have been tremendously helpful to the reef program participating in many types of underwater surveys such as fish counts on reef balls and subway cars, as well as underwater videography of reef communities.

Captains Hoden and Dreher are both certified by the National Association of Underwater Instructors and have a combined experience of over 50 years. Captain Hoden also enjoyed a 32-year career as a Research Diver and Marine Biologist with Rutgers University Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences.



Robert Probst, Cleanwater of New York, Inc.

New Jersey's Reef Program has rigid standards for preparing vessels to serve as reefs. When a vessel is selected to serve as reef habitat, several issues must be addressed before transporting the vessel to a reef site for sinking. All oil must be removed from fuel tanks, hydraulic lines, tanks and the bilge. In addition to these requirements, the vessel must also be prepared for sinking by breaching the hull at key locations and subsequently being "soft patched." All watertight doors and bulkheads must also be cut and opened to ensure that no trapped air collects that would preclude the vessel from sinking quickly, and all floatables must be removed prior to the sinking event.

New Jersey's Reef Program seeks the help of professionals adept at performing these tasks. Bob Probst of Cleanwater of New York, Inc. is one individual who has conscientiously prepared vessels for New Jersey's Reef Program starting back in 1987 with the Aqua II (deployed on the Garden State North Reef). A large part of Probst's career has been keeping vessels afloat and seaworthy but when asked to prepare vessels for reefing, a new glimmer of enthusiasm surfaced as he prepared for the challenge.

Being a friend to marine life and clean water, Probst and his staff have meticulously prepared eight vessels for reefing and all have passed U.S. Coast Guard final inspections with flying colors.

A special thanks to Bob and his crew for providing places to go fishing and scuba diving for the next 50 years.



Accomplishments, 1984-2006

Since the inception of the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Reef Program in 1984, 3,608 patch reefs have been built on New Jersey's network of 15 ocean reef sites. A patch reef is a several-square-yard to several-acre reef created by sinking a ship or placing a barge load of other material on the sea floor. In 2005, 228 patch reefs were constructed.

Reef Material	Patch Reefs Built in 2006	Total Patch Reefs Built 1984-2006
Rock	34	2002
Concrete	11	251
Reef Balls	9	146
Concrete Castings	20	64
Vessels	8	147
Army Tanks	-	397
Other	-	500
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Total	82	3507

What's in Store for 2007

Rock	500,000 cubic yards
Reef Balls	600
Concrete Castings	150
Vessels	77-foot trawler 70-foot trawler 51-foot fire boat



Reefbound, a 25-foot research vessel used by the Artificial Reef Program.

Tog Fishing - The Basics

by Capt. Marc E. Resciniti

Tog are one of the most challenging species to pursue while fishing over New Jersey's Artificial Reefs. These basic techniques will help you land more fish this season.

Boat Placement Over a Reef

Proper boat placement and anchoring is the key to a successful day out tog fishing. Your boat has to be positioned directly over a piece of structure and remain steady. To accomplish this, first locate a piece of structure using DGPS or LORAN C coordinates. Once in the vicinity, circle your boat around the waypoint and watch the depth sounder until you see the structure on the screen. Mark the area with a buoy, it will give you a reference point while you anchor the boat. After the site is located, kick the boat in neutral and determine your drift. Run up current of the drift and lay two anchors off your bow making a 45 degree angle between them. Finally, let out enough scope to drift back to your reference buoy. This anchoring technique will keep your boat much steadier over the structure than using a single anchor.

Tackle and Rigging

The ideal equipment for tog fishing is a conventional rod and reel. The rod must have a good backbone and capable of handling a minimum of an 8 - ounce sinker. The reel should be spooled with at least 30-pound line and have a low gear ratio to provide enough torque to haul the powerful tog out of his home. Old time pinhookers (commercial rod and reel tog fisherman) would use a 1:1 ratio reel, but that is not necessary.

A good tog rig consists of leader line, two sharp and strong hooks, and a heavy lead sinker. The leader line should consist of at least 50-pound fluorocarbon and be about 3 to 4 feet long. It can be tied to the main line using a number of different knots, but an albright knot seems to hold best. Use a perfection loop at the bottom of the rig to attach at least an 8-ounce bank sinker (a heavier bank sinker will be needed if conditions are rough). A blood loop dropper knot should be tied about 4 inches above the sinker for the attachment of a snelled hook. This loop attaches to the leader at a right angle, which prevents the snelled hooks from tangling. An easy way to snell hooks is to use a 2-foot piece of fluorocarbon and tie a 2/0 to 4/0 hook to one end with a domhof knot. Then do the same to the other end of the fluorocarbon. This leaves you with two hooks, one on either end. Hold the hooks in your hand and double up the line and tie a double overhand loop at the opposite end of the hooks. Take the double overhand loop and run it through the dropper knot on the leader. Insert the two hooks through the double overhand loop and pull on the hooks until the loop is tight. The snelled hooks should extend about 6 to 8 inches from the main leader line. This leaves you with a rig that has two hooks lying on the bottom.

Bait

The most common bait of choice under most conditions is the green crab; however, sometimes other species of crabs work better. For instance hermits, calicos, or fiddler crabs may entice more bites during the warmer months, but Jonahs and rock crabs may be better during the winter. Surf clams and conch can be used but they generally attract small fish.

The two hooks are inserted into either a piece of crab or a whole crab. Run the hooks through the knuckles of the crab to prevent the bait from falling off. On days when the bite is good, a whole crab will entice the larger fish to hit.

Feeling the Bite

Tog are one of the most difficult fish to hook. The repetitive tapping when a tog hits causes a lot of people to set the hook too early and miss fish. The key here is patience. When tog are lightly tapping they don't have a good hold of the bait. Be patient, wait until the fish gives a pull, not a tap. Every day brings a different bite. Sometimes the bite is on and you can't miss and other times you can barely feel a tug. If the bite is light or non-existent just move to the other side of the boat or let some scope out to adjust your position on the piece of structure. That can make all the difference in the world. Once you feel a good pull, set the hook and crank the reel. Tog have to be hauled out of the structure with gusto, otherwise, the fish will hang your rig in the structure.

Tog Chowder Recipe

One of my favorite ways to prepare this tasty fish is to make tog chowder. Use any New England clam chowder recipe and substitute cubed tog fillets for clams. Remember, don't overcook the tog as it may become tough and chewy. The recipe that I prefer can be found on the last page:

Underwater “Aerial” Photography

by Jeff Carlson and Jennifer Resciniti

Anyone interested in fishing and scuba diving probably has heard the term side scan sonar. Side scanning can be envisioned as underwater aerial photography, and can be used for a range of applications. Finding the wreckage of the Titanic involved a survey ship searching the sea floor for the remnants of the ill-fated ocean liner, and New Jersey’s Reef Program monitors the progress of reef development by periodically surveying selected sites. Monitoring these sites is also a requirement of the reef building permits issued by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

The side scanning process involves a survey ship towing a transducer known as a “towfish” that records and sends bottom images to a monitor in the wheelhouse of the ship. A receiver processes the images and then accurately displays any shipwrecks or other hard targets located within the selected range of the side scan unit. These targets appear on the monitor similar to real time underwater photographs. The side scan unit used to survey New Jersey’s reefs is capable of mapping targets with clear detail 150 meters to either side of the towfish. Reducing the range capability of the unit proportionately increases the detail of the scanned images.

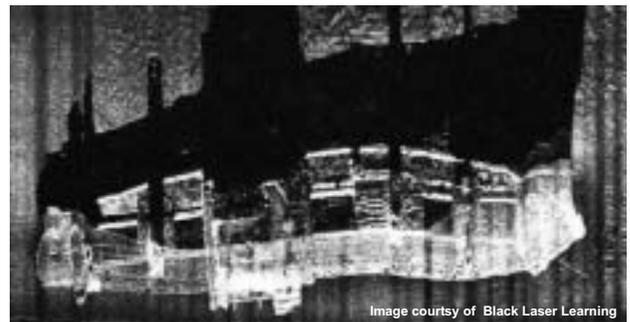
Scanning provides information concerning how reef material is oriented on the sea floor. From the survey we can determine if a vessel is upside down, right side up or on its side. We can also analyze the physical condition of a shipwreck checking to see what changes have occurred since the previous side scan. We may also observe any other reef material that lies nearby a shipwreck such as reef balls, rock and concrete. Bottom currents may produce scouring on either side of a shipwreck possibly making it more attractive to certain species of fish. As reef structures age and mature, some deterioration and changes may occur that expose new surfaces and profiles. These changes could entice a new and different group of encrusters and other marine life to the structure.

All of this information is used to plan future reef enhancement. Settling rates, material durability, profiles and stability on the sea floor can all be measured. More importantly, these surveys must be conducted to document exact locations of existing material and assure that movement has not occurred.

Studying the results of side scan can help us refine future placements of reef material to improve habitat for a variety of marine creatures seeking to make this ocean oasis their home.



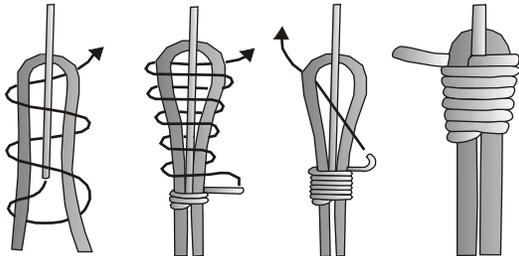
New Jersey’s largest and most popular reef wreck, the Algot



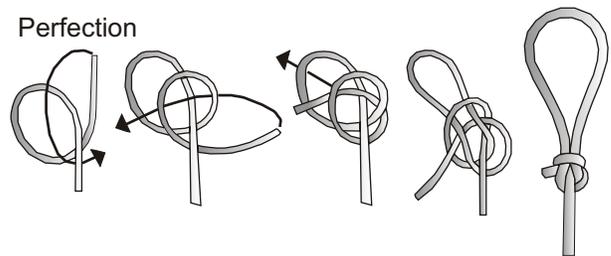
Side scan sonar image of the Algot

How to Tie Some Helpful Knots...

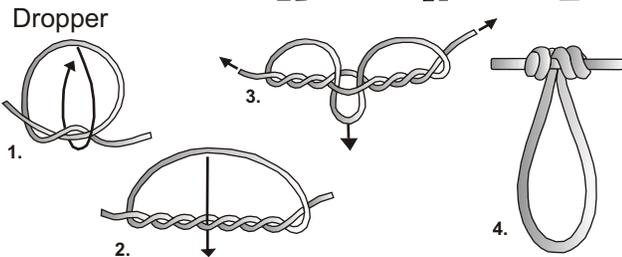
Albright



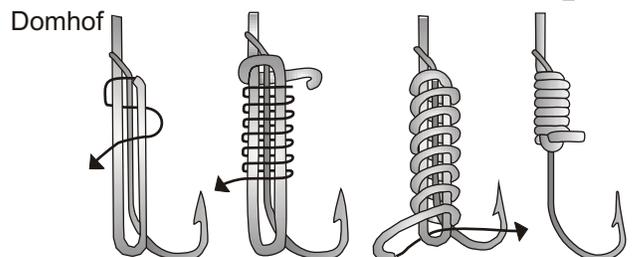
Perfection



Dropper



Domhof



Wanted Dead or Alive: Steel-Hulled Vessels

by Jeff Carlson and Hugh Carberry

“New Jersey’s Reef Program would like to issue an all points bulletin for derelict steel-hulled vessels. They were last seen hanging out at shipyards, berthing areas and commercial fishing docks. These vessels are typically rusty, need a new paint job, and have many scars. If you have any information concerning these vessels, please contact the Reef Program at (609) 748-2022. A reward in the way of a limited edition fish print will be issued if the vessel is apprehended.”

The reef program is always on the lookout for steel-hulled vessels. Over the past 23 years more than 147 ships have been sunk on New Jersey’s 15-site reef network. These vessels provide habitat for fishes and other marine life and serve as prime underwater real estate for recreational anglers and sport diving enthusiasts. All derelict vessels are not the same and the following protocols are utilized by the Reef Program to quickly assess their value:

- ▶️ Length of at least 30 feet
- ▶️ Seaworthiness and a sound hull
- ▶️ Clean interior (bilge, engine room and other compartments)

If these protocols are met, the vessel is a reefing candidate; however, this is just the beginning. The vessel must be further cleaned and prepared prior to the sinking event. All residual fuels, oils and greases in the bilge must be removed by steam cleaning. All loose floatable debris such as wood, paper and plastic must be removed from the vessel. Batteries, fire extinguishers and refrigerators all must go. The main engine and generator must either be removed or internally cleaned free of oil and grease via a steam cleaning. Fuel cells must be drained, cut open and cleaned. Typically a professional is called in to perform these services.

Other preparatory work includes cutting bulkheads and any other watertight compartments to facilitate sinking and to allow water to freely circulate through the vessel when sunk. The deck above all bulkheaded compartments are cut to vent air during sinking. Sometimes, holes are cut just above the water line and are covered with patches until the vessel arrives at the reef site. These patches are then removed during scuttling to facilitate sinking. Last but not least, the vessel must pass a mandatory U.S. Coast Guard inspection.

Shipwrecks have a certain mystique and have traditionally been the structure of choice for anglers and sport divers. If you happen to see or know of a vessel that meets our criteria, please let us know. Your help may pay big dividends in improving your local fishing grounds.

Approvals Received to Reduce Minimum Clearance at Four Reef Sites

In August 2006, New Jersey’s Reef Program received approvals to reduce the minimum clearances at the Sandy Hook, Axel Carlson, Barnegat Light and Great Egg reefs from the Philadelphia District, Army Corps of Engineers and from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Land Use Regulation. The changes in clearance are as follows:

Sandy Hook Reef - from 40’ to 30’ at mean low water

Axel Carlson Reef - from 50’ to 40’ at mean low water

Barnegat Light Reef - from 50’ to 40’ at mean low water

Great Egg Reef - from 50’ to 40’ at mean low water

The reduced minimum clearance at the four reef sites will allow the Reef Program to construct reefs that are 10 feet higher in vertical profile. For anglers who frequent the Axel Carlson and Sandy Hook reefs, this translates into higher rock mountains on the Axel Carlson and more rock and concrete deployments on Sandy Hook. On the Barnegat Light and Great Egg reefs, vessels 20 feet and 25 feet in vertical profile, respectively, can be sunk. Previously, only low-profile vessels such as deck barges and tanker barges could be sunk on these reefs. As vessels such as tugboat and fishing trawlers become available for reefing, they will be deployed on the Barnegat Light and Great Egg reefs.

Cunner - A Profile

by Stacey Reap

A regular reef-system resident, the cunner (*Tautoglabrus adspersus*) does not enjoy quite as glamorous a reputation as its close relative the highly prized tautog, but the two fish share many similarities.

Also commonly known as bergall, cunner share the tautog's single long dorsal fin, the anterior majority of which harbors a series of spines that give way to softer rays that are rounded toward the posterior of the fish. The cunner's rounded tail fin originates from a deep caudal peduncle, and its ventral fins are located almost directly beneath the pectorals. It has a slimmer body, more pointed snout and much thinner lips than the distinctively headed tautog.

Cunner exhibit a spectrum of coloration, attributable to the different habitat backdrops in which it is found. They can range from rusty red to brown to greenish gray and more, and young fish, up to 10 cm, have a black spot on the soft part of the dorsal fin.

Members of the species generally only reach approximately 10 in (25 cm) in length and weigh less than half a pound, although New Jersey boasts a new state record fish caught March 7, 2006, by Nick Honachefsky of Mantoloking.

The fish was 16 in. long and weighed 2 lbs., 9 oz., beating the previous state record by nearly a pound, and has been certified by the International Game Fish Association as a world record.

Ranging along the Atlantic coast and offshore banks of North America, cunner are regular residents from Newfoundland to New Jersey and are occasionally found as far south as the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.

Although not a schooling fish, cunner generally live together, probably due to their common dependance on cover in their habitat. Active during the day, they become quiescent at night and require shelter, such as reefs, rock outcroppings or eelgrass beds, for protection. The number of suitable shelter sites within a habitat is thought to be a limiting factor for population size within a given area.

While most of the population occupies perennial habitats year-round, some cunner disperse to seasonal habitats composed of eelgrass, stands of kelp or mussel beds when they become available.

Starting with the larger fish, cunner become torpid or inactive when water temperatures fall to about 8 degrees C and remain in their shelter sites until water temperatures increase in the spring.

Some fish may leave the perennial habitats in the spring due to aggressive competition during spawning season. The fish spawn mainly from late spring through early summer, and upon hatching the larvae are approximately 2 to 2.2 mm long. At 15 mm, young cunner have already assumed nearly adult form. Most cunner mature in their third summer, when they are two full years old and 3 in. long.

Sharing a buck-toothed appearance with the tautog, in addition to its conical jaw teeth, cunner have patches of knobby teeth on the roof of the mouth and

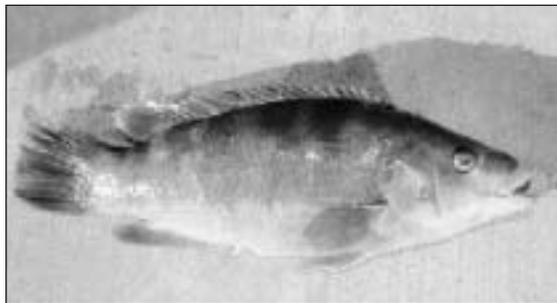
floor of the throat that aid in grinding food. The omnivorous fish forages throughout the day on food items frequently occurring on New Jersey's reefs in large abundance such as blue mussels, barnacles, amphipods, shrimp and small lobsters. Their scan-and-pick feeding methods result in the consumption of a variety of other small creatures, including small fish like silversides and pipefish.

Eel grass is commonly found in their stomachs, as well.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, cunner was a favorite panfish with some areas reporting landings in the hundreds of thousands of pounds. Though now not typically thought of for its commercial or recreational value, cunner continue to entertain and confound fisherman and divers with their somewhat brash behavior and bait-stealing antics.

When targeting this tiny-mouthed, lightning-quick bait stripper, a tough-textured bait such as strips of squid or conch can be used on small hooks with minimal weight, though they'll go for most anything. Keep a feel of your line to detect the light taps when they go for the bait; because they're small fish, only a moderate tug should be used to set the hook.

Though often not regarded as a good eating fish, probably due to their size, cunner are reportedly tasty. They can be pan or oven fried or baked whole, with bones and fins pulling away easily from the flesh, or filleted, if you are patient.



State record cunner caught by Nick Honachefsky (2 lb. 9 oz.)

Reef-Related Web and E-Mail Sites

njfishandwildlife.com

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife,
Reef program information

njscuba.net

Reef construction, reef studies, photos

gotosnapshot.com

Reef shipwrecks, reef structures,
underwater photos

realfish-underwater.com

Diving, video, marine art

wreckvalle@aol.com

Diving, current events

Scubanj.org

NJ Council of Dive Clubs

Get Reef Updates Via E-Mail

If you would like to receive periodic updates about New Jersey's reef-building activities, including photos and coordinates, send us your e-mail address.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

E-mail: _____

I am (check all that apply):

- angler diver charter captain
 party boat captain commercial fisherman
 Researcher marine industry representative

Mail to: Reef Program, Division of Fish and Wildlife,
P.O. Box 418, Port Republic, NJ 08241

Tog Chowder Recipe

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons of butter
1 small onion, chopped fine
1 bay leaf, fresh or dried
2 tablespoons flour
1 rounded teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
1 cup clam juice
1 can chicken or vegetable broth
2 cups of whole milk or light cream
2 medium white-skinned potatoes, peeled and diced
4 slices of cooked bacon, chopped
1-2 lbs. of tog filets, cubed
Sea salt and black pepper to taste
Chopped chives, garnish

Preparation:

In a deep pot, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion and bay leaf and cook 2-3 minutes. Whisk in flour and Old Bay and cook 2 more minutes. Whisk in clam juice and broth and combine; cook until broth begins to thicken. Stir in milk slowly. Add potatoes, raise heat to high and bring the soup to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook, 12-15 minutes till potatoes are tender. Add bacon and tog. Cook 2-3 minutes or until tog begins to flake. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with chives.

Would you like to see your photo in the '08 Reef News edition? Send us your "best wreck/reef catch" photo to:

Reef Program
NJ Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 418
Port Republic, NJ 08241

Please include a SASE if you would like your photo returned.

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**REEF PROGRAM
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
P.O. BOX 418
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